Requirements for Federal Grant Applicants:
Adopted from Governor of Maryland Grants Manual (Available online)

Most federal agencies now require that grant applications be submitted online at grants.gov. Even if applying via mail, you must have the following information completed before you can apply or register for a username on grants.gov.

Grants.gov Registration
The following is taken directly from the grants.gov website. Helpful tutorials are available on the site that illustrate these steps. Registration approval takes approximately 3-5 business days; completion of all steps can take up to four weeks.

STEP 1: Obtain DUNS Number. **Same day.** If requested by phone (1-866-705-5711) DUNS is provided immediately. If your organization does not have one, you will need to go to the Dun & Bradstreet website to obtain the number. *Information for Foreign Registrants.*Webform requests take 1-2 business days.*

STEP 2: Register with CCR. **Three to five business days or up to two weeks.** If you already have a TIN, your CCR registration will take 3-5 business days to process. If you are applying for an EIN please allow up to 2 weeks. Ensure that your organization is registered with the Central Contractor Registration (CCR). If your organization is not, an authorizing official of your organization must register.

STEP 3: Username & Password. **Same day.** Complete your AOR (Authorized Organization Representative) profile on Grants.gov and create your username and password. You will need to use your organization's DUNS Number to complete this step.

STEP 4: AOR Authorization. ***Same day.** The E-Business Point of Contact (E-Biz POC) at your organization must login to Grants.gov to confirm you as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR). Please note that there can be more than one AOR for your organization. In some cases the E-Biz POC is also the AOR for an organization. *Time depends on responsiveness of your E-Biz POC.*

STEP 5: Track AOR Status. At any time, you can track your AOR status by logging in with your username and password. Login as an "Applicant" by entering your username & the password you obtained in Step 3.

Once you are able to log into grants.gov, you can apply for grants. You need a specific version of Adobe Reader; the website will test your system to see if your computer is compatible. Once submitted, you can track your submission.

Reading the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFA)
When reading the NOFA pay close attention to the technical criteria as well as the content. Often times, grant applications that do not meet the technical criteria (number of pages, formatting, required attachments, etc.) are not reviewed for content, especially if there are a large number of applications. Most NOFAs will include a checklist of items that must be included. Please pay close attention to this list. Again, if something is missing, your application may not be reviewed.

While writing the grant, become familiar with the scoring or application review process. Use this as a guide to place emphasis on certain parts of the grant. If a section only gives 5 points and another 20, spend more quality grant research and writing time on the section with the larger point award. Also, try for any possible bonus points.

State agencies review applications for technical compliance with grant application instructions. Funding may be allocated based on a variety of criteria. The criteria to be used by the federal government will be specified in the grant application instructions. Following are types of criteria that may be evaluated, depending upon the grant:
- comparison to other states
- current level of infrastructure and/or provision of services to a specific population
- current statistics with regard to specific activities. Examples include: teenage pregnancy rates, dropout rates, low test scores in certain subjects, STD rates, per capita income.
- strategies that will be used to change and improve a current situation.

Writing and Reviewing the Grant Application
Your grant writer or program manager most likely will write the narrative for the grant and your budget person will formulate the budget and budget narrative. In addition you should have someone less familiar with the specifics of the grant review your application for grammar, consistency, the technical aspects, and required information. This person should be familiar with the NOFA and raise questions about content that might be missing or isn't clear.

Grant Submission
Do not wait until the day the grant is due to submit your application! When you submit via grants.gov, you will receive a string of confirmation emails. The first two (and most important) emails could take up to two days to receive. One confirms that your application was received and the other confirms that the application was successfully validated. If you do not receive these emails within the two day period, call the grants.gov Contact Center, 1-800-518-4726.